

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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BROWN & SMITH CONDEMN DANIELS' BROKEN PROMISE

INDIANAPOLIS—More than 250 Gary residents attended a Statehouse rally coordinated by State Rep. Vernon G. Smith (D-Gary) on Monday. Before the rally ended, they heard from State Rep. Charlie Brown (D-Gary) that an agreement had been reached with the Daniels administration to keep the Gary branch open until Oct. 1. Before the delegation arrived back in Gary, the administration had already changed its mind.

Brown said Gov. Mitch Daniels' Chief of Staff Harry Gonso, during a private meeting, made that promise to him, State Sen. Earline Rogers (D-Gary) and Gary Mayor Scott King. Brown said he felt the Daniels administration's broken promise was a betrayal of trust.

"What upsets me the most is that the administration lied to me and made me look foolish to my constituents when I announced, during the rally, that we had an agreement to allow the bureau to remain open until Oct. 1, if the city would pay the additional lease cost up to and including Oct. 1 with two or more BMV employees continuing on the job through Oct. 1," explained Brown. "Oscar Wilde once wrote, 'Always forgive your enemies, nothing annoys them more.' Maybe this is the case for the governor's office, because I will be a nuisance from this day forth."

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Gonso called the rally leaders after they returned home Monday evening to tell them that the Gary BMV branch would close Saturday, Sept. 17, instead of the Oct. 1 date agreed to earlier in the day.

Smith was proud of the large Gary delegation who attended the rally but is angered by Daniels' broken promise.

"I would like to thank the people for coming," said Smith. "We are not giving up this fight. We will take this fight to the courts and continue to resist this injustice. The Daniels administration has no integrity, no credibility and no conscience. It is a tragedy to have people like this leading our state."

"It is unfortunate the governor's office is backing away from an agreement we had as late as yesterday morning," Brown added. "Apparently Mr. Silverman is running state government now. It is beyond the pale that the governor cannot see that closing the branch is worthy of the flack and discontent it has caused the people of our community."

Smith agreed.

"The (Daniels) administration has to understand that there is a cost involved with providing vital services to the public," Smith said. "People on the street have to have driver's licenses and insurance as well as other necessities. Government should not be a profit-making venture, especially at the expense of our state's citizens. I do not believe any of the branches around the state should have been closed."

Meanwhile, Gary city officials continue to try to negotiate with the Daniels administration.

